

## Grid failure: Power disruption hits Jatiya Sangsad, court, ZIA

**'Industries incurring huge loss'**

By Staff Correspondent

Two top chambers and a leading association expressed deep concern yesterday over deteriorating power situation in the country. They said the ready-made garment factories in and around Dhaka city alone were incurring losses to the tune of Tk two crore for every hour of load shedding.

The trade bodies said the recent break-down in the national power grid and faults in the transmission lines with the resultant power disruptions, low voltage and load-shedding have triggered widespread concern in the industrial sector, particularly in the small and medium enterprises which do not have standby electricity generation facilities, said a press release.

"Such an alarming situation is comparable to any national disaster and deserves to be tackled in that manner," said the press release signed by President of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Latifur Rahman, President of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry Aftabul Islam and President of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association Anisur Rahman Sinha.

However, in spite of repeated assurances during the last several months by the government, particularly the Energy Ministry, the situation has perhaps taken the worst turn. Now, local sub-stations can no longer issue in advance notice informing consumers about load-shedding and when there are disruption or low-voltage, they cannot provide any information as to when the supply will be restored, the release said.

It said that such a situation will obviously put industries into huge financial losses and employment of a great number of workers at stake. The agriculture sector is also facing a similar situation.

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The national grid failed again yesterday disrupting power supply in most parts of the country including the city. Dhaka, Rajshahi, Khulna and Barisal divisions were without power for about 20 minutes as the grid failed at 10:58 am due to tripping of a circuit in the 230-KV Ashuganj-Ghorasal grid line.

Although PDB men started restoring power supply in dis-

By Staff Correspondent

tricts under the four divisions in the afternoon, there were frequent disruptions and load shedding in those areas due to inadequate supply.

In the city, power supply was disrupted also in high priority areas like the Jatiya Sangsad, Zia International Airport and Secretariat.

As the mercury rose to 34.4 degree Celsius in the capital, the absence of power for two to

three hours in most parts of the city followed by frequent disruptions throughout the day increased miseries of the city dwellers.

Some parts the capital and its adjacent areas remained without power till filing of the report at 9.30 last night.

Water supply was also affected in different areas of the city. Many residents reported that their electrical and electronic goods were damaged by the frequent disruptions in power supply.

Normal activities at offices, business houses, shopping centres, educational institutions and in the court area were seriously affected due to sultry heat and frequent power failure. At the Jatiya Sangsad, power supply was disrupted twice yesterday. Some 15 persons remained stuck inside a lift for few minutes due to power failure.

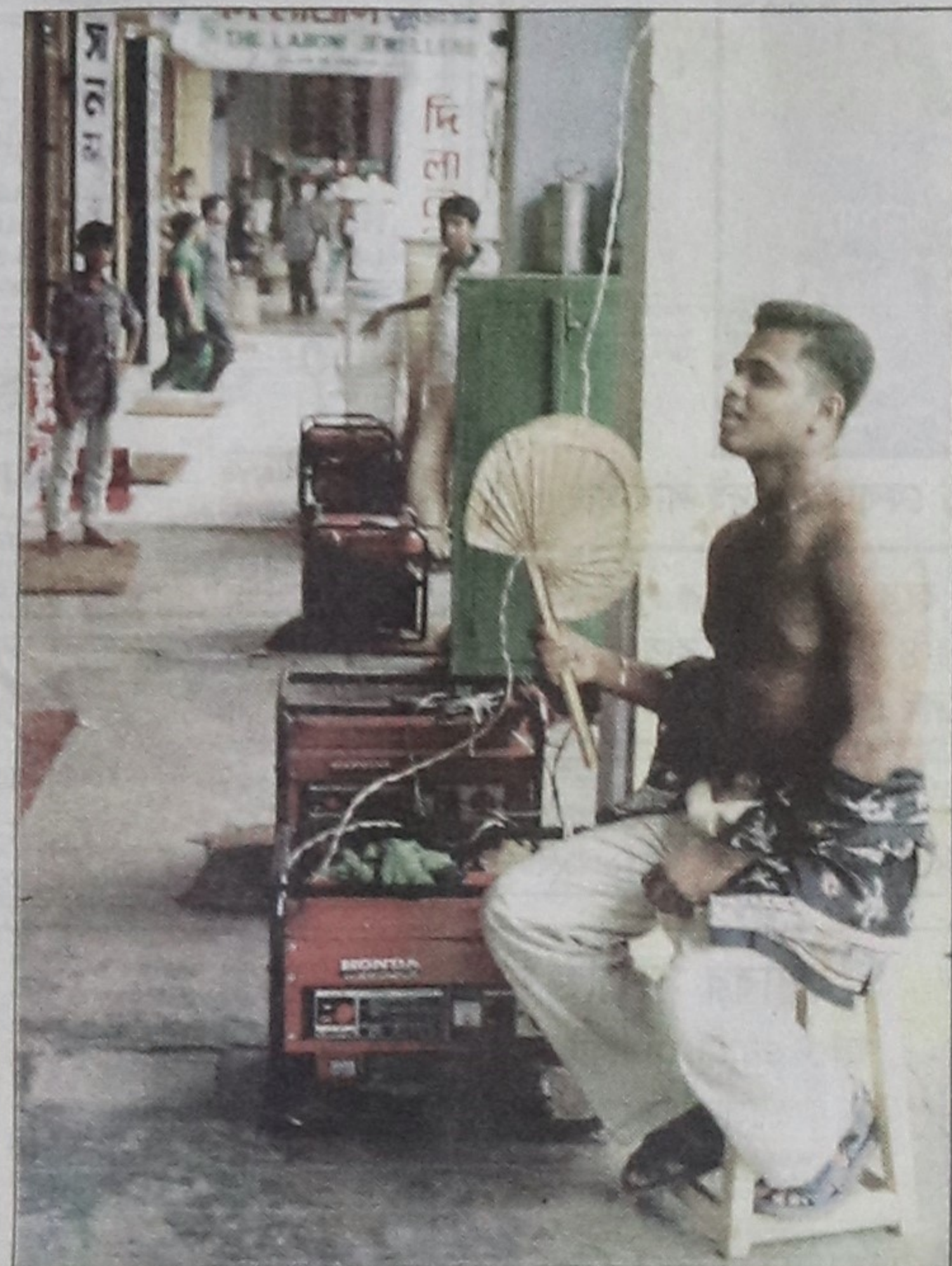
There was no power supply at Zia International Airport from 11 am to 1-30 pm and from 4 pm to 4-25 pm. Emergency power supply was provided through a generator. But the air-conditioning system did not operate, leaving the passengers and officials inside suffering on a hot and humid day.

One out of the two circuits of the 230-KV line tripped due to 'technical problem'. Subsequently, the other circuit also tripped due to excessive load. This stopped power transmission between Ghorasal and Ashuganj, the two major power stations in the country, PDB officials said.

As a result, operation of most of the power generation units including those at Haripur, Siddhirganj in the eastern region and other units in the western region were stopped.

PDB sources said power supply was restored first at Bangabhaban and its surrounding areas at around 11:18 am through the alternative

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A shopkeeper at city's New Market tries to cool off using a hand fan during power disruption yesterday. --Star Photo

## Akhteruzzaman cites 7 reasons in his reply to showcause

By Staff Correspondent

BNP served a notice on Akhter September 11 asking him to show cause as to why he should not be expelled from the party for what it termed his anti-organisational activities. Earlier on September 5, the party at a Standing Committee meeting

suspended his primary membership for making statement against the party position on the issue of joining parliament.

He was asked to come up with his reply to party secretary-general within three days on receipt of the final notice. Akhter wrote a letter to the party chief suggesting that BNP return to parliament bracing the

long boycott. He made copies of the letter available to press.

In his reply to the show-cause notice, the lawmaker cited seven reasons for which he should not be expelled from the party. He distributed copies of his letter among reporters at Jatiya Sangsad at about 1 p.m.

He said like every citizen of the country he also has the basic right to express his opinion. Expression of opinion and thoughts in BNP cannot be a crime by any means as it is a democratic political party.

The suspended MP said that he joined the parliament for the interest of the country and that all

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## Gulshan garments fire: No action against owners yet

By Staff Correspondent

No action has been taken against the authorities of the garment factory in the city in which 12 people were killed in a fire incident on the night of August 27.

The tragic incident took place as there was no fire safety arrangement at the factory, located at Banani.

Asked why no action has yet been taken in this regard, officials of the Fire Service and Civil Defence Department and police shifted the responsibility to each other.

Fire Service officials said they did not file any case as investigation was going on. They avoided a direct reply when asked whether there was any progress in the investigation and how long it would con-

tinue.

Gulshan thana officials said they did not file any case as they were waiting a report from the Fire Service.

Sources said the Fire Service department has the obligation to file case in such an incident.

It also has the authority to cancel fire safety licence and take other punitive actions against any factory owner for violating fire safety rules.

But it took no action against any defaulting garment factory owner although at least 100 people were killed in fire and fire related incidents in garment factories in the city since 1990, the sources said.

The DG of the Fire Service and Civil Defence Department also wrote to the president of

Bangladesh garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) earlier that most of the garments factories in the city were violating fire safety laws of the Fire Service and Civil Defence Ordinance of 1951.

Explaining, an official of the department said so long they preferred motivating authorities of garment factories to improve safety conditions. This worked well till the recent incident, he said.

Meanwhile sources in the home ministry said a draft Bill seeking amendments to the Fire Service and Civil Defence Ordinance of 1951 is lying with the ministry. The ministry took about three years to finalise the

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Fireworks during the opening ceremony for the Sydney 2000 Olympic football preliminaries in Melbourne yesterday. The Millennium Games will be held in Sydney from September 15 to October 1 with football preliminaries being held throughout Australia. --AFP photo

## Olympic soccer kicks off Doom & gloom two days ahead of opening

SYDNEY, Sept 13: The Sydney Olympics began today, but not the way Australia wanted it to, reports AFP.

While bumper crowds filled the football stadiums, an expectant host nation clamouring for a record haul of Olympic medals came away empty-handed and then there was the drug scandals.

Taiwanese weightlifter Chen Po-pu became the first athlete to be sent home from Sydney after testing positive to steroids.

News of his expulsion was followed by confirmation that Bulgarian long and triple jumper Iva Prandzeva, a two-

A new TVRO has been installed at Bangladesh Television (BTV) for direct transmission of Sydney Olympic through satellite. Finance Minister Shah A M S Kibria formally inaugurated the facility at a function at the BTV auditorium here yesterday afternoon, reports BSS.

time world outdoor championship medalist, had failed a second test for anabolic steroids.

Later today Kazakh swimmer Yevgenia Yermakova was barred from the Games for testing positive to furosemide, a diu-

retic. Throw into the equation Olympic bus drivers walking off the job, noxious fumes over-coming 40 people at Sydney's international airport and Aboriginals threatening protests, the alarm bells started ringing.

But there was positive news. US women's athletics coach Karen Dennis, said Marion Jones would take home an unprecedented five gold medals.

Pat Rafter wanted to patch things up with Mark Philippoussis and Danir Dokic, the Mad Dad of tennis, will have to pay to watch his daughter play.

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Khaleda leaving for KSA yesterday. --Star photo

## Adel surrenders, sent to jail

By Court Correspondent

Jatiya Party leader Jahangir Mohammad Adel was sent to Dhaka Central Jail yesterday after the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court rejected his bail prayer in a sedition case.

Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Shaileendra Kumar Adhikari also ordered the jail authorities to give him first class division in jail. He also ordered return of Adel's movable property, attached on September 7 on a court order.

The case file will be sent to the court of Metropolitan Sessions Judge on September 17 for trial, the CMM said at the court.

Adel was taken to the Cen-

tral Jail in a prison van amid tight security. Police in riot gear were deployed around the premises of the CMM's court.

Adel, a former deputy mayor of Dhaka City Corporation, is facing sedition charge as a Pakistani national flag was hoisted atop his house in the city on August 14, national day of that country.

Adel had surrendered before the High Court on Sunday and prayed for bail. He spent the night at the chamber of his lawyer at the High Court building to avoid arrest as the bail prayer could not be heard on that day because of time

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Adel being taken to jail after the CMM's Court rejected his bail prayer yesterday. --Star photo

## Khaleda in Jeddah

By Staff Correspondent

BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia reached Jeddah yesterday afternoon.

She is on a 10-day visit to Saudi Arabia at the invitation of Saudi King Fahad-Bin Abdul Aziz. She will perform Umrah during the visit.

Khaleda was given a hearty reception on her arrival at Jeddah airport at 3:30 pm local time, said a party press release.

High officials from Royal Saudi Protocol office, Bangladesh Embassy officials in KSA and a large number of expatriate Bangladeshis as well as local BNP leaders and workers welcomed her at the airport.

Later, Khaleda Zia was taken to Jeddah Conference Palace. She was due to leave for Makah to perform Umrah yesterday. Besides, she is also expected to have a medical check up at the King Faisal Hospital.

Earlier, the BNP Chairperson left Dhaka on board a Saudi Airlines aircraft at noon. A large number of leaders and activists of BNP and its different front organisations saw her off at the Zia International Airport.

## GSP facilities Clinton for favourable treatment

WASHINGTON, Sept 13: Bangladesh is expecting a favourable treatment from the United States on the question of Generalised System of Preference (GSP) in textiles, reports BSS.

President Clinton has instructed his administration to look sympathetically into the matter of GSP facilities to Bangladesh in view of the demand made by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

This was conveyed by Bruce Riedel, Special Assistant to President Clinton to State Minister for Foreign Affairs. Abul Hasan Chowdhury at a meeting on Monday at the White House, Ambassador K M Shehabuddin was present.

Prime Minister during her recent visit to New York to attend the UN Millennium Summit requested President Clinton not to withdraw GSP facilities to Bangladesh.

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## Govt under fire for agreeing to SAARC cumulation system

By Staff Correspondent

Speakers at a discussion yesterday criticised the government for agreeing on the SAARC cumulation system in apparel export to the European countries without consulting the people concerned.

They said the government should have consulted the garment manufacturers and people involved with backward linkage industries before giving consent to the system for availing generalised system of preference

(GSP) against the exported goods to the European countries.

They also urged the government to re-consider the issue before making SAARC cumulation effective from October 1 this year for the sake of development of backward linkage industries in the country.

Bangladesh Garment Sramik Karmachari Federation and Sammitilo Sramik Forum organised the seminar at CIRDAP

auditorium. Dr. Debapriya Bhattacharya, Executive Director of Centre for Policy Dialogue, Prof. Mostafizur Rahman of Dhaka University, Zillul Hay Razi of the European Commission, Dhaka office, Mohammad Nuruddin, Chairman, BGMEA standing committee on labour arbitration, Dr. Salma Zahir, and labour leaders Shariat Ullah, Abdul Hossain, Joyanal Abedin, Zaid Iqbal Khan and Delwar Hossain participated in the

discussion. Dr. Debapriya said the country's textile sector is going to face a number of challenges in the near future, yet there is no comprehensive study or strategic guideline.

The major challenges facing the country, according to him, are withdrawal of quota regime in the year 2005, impact of a recent bill passed by the US Congress allowing duty- and quota-free access of goods from

sub-Saharan and African states, threat of cancellation of GSP facilities by the US government and SAARC regional cumulation for exporting goods to the European markets.

He also said that the actual response should come from the entrepreneurs since they are main victims of the policy changes.

Prof. Mostafiz said the issue of regional cumulation needs much more than it has re-

ceived. It is not clear why the government suddenly agreed on the provision despite declining earlier.

He observed that the garment exporters will have to bring down prices of their products to survive in a quota-free market. Referring to the EU rule regarding regional cumulation, he said to avail the GSP facilities local entrepreneurs would have to add more value

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Beyond The Canvas  
Portrait of a Painter

This week's cover story focuses on internationally famous Bangladeshi painter Shahabuddin. The ace artist has turned 50 on September 11, 2000

**Inside Today**

**Article**

**National Defence Missile and Legacy of President Clinton**

Column: Panorama  
By Dilara Choudhury

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**Business**

Plan to salvage sick leather industries still in limbo

DSE, CSE price quotations  
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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Sept 14		6:03 pm
Sept 15	5:45 am	

Prayer Timings		
September 14		
Fajr	4:45	5:15
Zohr	12:45	1:15
Asr	4:30	4:45
Maghrib	6:08	6:13
Esha	7:45	8:15

Source: Islamic Foundation